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Department of State

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FROM: Lima

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 524, November 7, 5 P.M.

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Apart from handful well-informed Peruvians general public still fails understand that Communist beachhead on Cuba poses direct threat to Peru. Tendency persists regard Cuban crisis primarily as part cold-war power struggle between US and USSR with Peru not directly involved. Even though public reaction US action was favorable most common comment among our strongest supporters was that US should act unilaterally to resolve crisis. To extent this attitude may be reflected elsewhere it might be useful accelerate our efforts convince governments, opinion leaders and people of OAR's that Cuban crisis is direct and immediate threat all hemisphere nations and that it is in their own self-interest take active part in resolving it.

Major Communist propaganda gambit is attempt disguise Soviet backdown on Cuba as Khrushchev peace effort in face US "intervention" in Cuba's domestic affairs and to contrast this effort with US readiness plunge world into atomic war. This gambit has generally failed here. USSR appears both interventionist and weak in face of US action and Castro is seen as bearded puppet manipulated by Soviets.

Specific Peruvian problems not directly and immediately affected by US stand on Cuba. Most important domestic issues are return to constitutional democracy through free elections next June and early implementation meaningful economic and social reform programs. Although Embassy will continue exert all possible influence attain these objectives its position

remains

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-2- 524, November 7, 5 P.M., from Lima

remains somewhat inhibited by internal political factors and junta's independent and nationalistic attitude toward US. Interim nature present regime also is obstacle to long-term planning and action on economic and social problems.

Castro-Communist subversion in Peru is directly related Cuban crisis but junta for most part still appears unwilling initiate forceful action curb such activities (Embassy telegram 523). Even though this could change in future as result internal and external pressures danger will exist that any measures taken against Communists will be applied even more vigorously against Apristas whom junta and armed forces regard as major enemy.

Interim nature junta and its nationalistic attitude argue against seeking solution at present to La Brea and Parinas issue as well as Ecuadorean boundary and territorial waters questions.

On balance therefore Embassy inclined recommend that for present we continue seek rebuild our influence, sharply diminished by recent experiences of non-recognition, suspension and then restoration of military aid, et cetera.

HENDERSON

MJA

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